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Johanne Cadorette,
P.O. 42052,
Montréal, QC
H2W 2T3.

Submissions sought for a desperately needed and long overdue anthology of Québec lesbian and gay fiction. Works by bisexual women and men and transgendered people are equally welcome. Please submit poetry and/or short fiction in French or English, maximum 25 pages typed, double-spaced before August 1, 1995. Send copies of work with a self-addressed stamped envelope to the attention of:

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A QUEBEC WITHOUT BORDERS, A CANADA WITHOUT BORDERS: An OUTspoken Women's Event. Themes included: Racist, sexist, classist immigration laws, policies and attitudes; White Domination; Nationalism vs Self-Determination; Expressions of sexuality, lust, passion, faith and spirituality under these imposed realities; Celebratory or critical expressions of cultural/ethnic identities. *Include bio.*

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index this! a literary calendar bent on disappearing the literary is interested in seeing/sounding your text and text-based visual, aural, performance art. if you send it to us we may print it or we may review it or who knows? (right now, we're really craving text-based visuals for a fall feature issue.) **index** lives @: P.O. Box 42082, Montreal, P.Q. H2W 2T3 and index_online@babylon.montreal.qc.ca



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volume 2

number four

july-august 1995

Halogen Haze

Lydia Jaworski
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**The Moth-Girl
Archetype**

Anne Stone
8

Gilbert Salvador
Calgary Part One

9

Sea-urchin

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**A letter to white
people who want to
visit India**

Ummni Khan

10

Samantha Anderson reviews the anthology **Semiotext(e) CANADAS**.
Dana Bath reviews **Highways & Dancehalls** by Diana Atkinson.
Gavin McInnes reviews the Montreal comics anthology **Mirrors**.
Scott Duncan reviews Kristina Drake's chapbook **Bodies in Motion**.
All of these last things occur on page 11.

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**ind
ex**

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**poetry
books
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tsq**

july...august
1995

Anne
Stone
Lydia
Jaworski

Ummni
Khan
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index magazine **MONTREAL**

literature/performance listings

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The Word

A June Night in the Late Cenozoic

Robert Allen

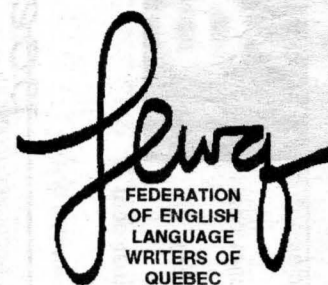
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A Writers' Organization



FEWQ was founded in 1992 by writers who were tired of working in isolation, many feeling like the last of an all-but-extinct species. There are actually hundreds of English-language writers living and working in Quebec.

FEWQ's raison d'être was simply to bring writers together and allow their needs to determine what the organization's priorities would be. From a handful of members in 1992, FEWQ rapidly attracted more than 150 members. In 1993 FEWQ was recognized by the Quebec government as the official representative of English-language writers resident in Quebec. By 1994 FEWQ had received funding and moved into the Atwater Library along with QSPELL and AEAQ (the Association of English-language Publishers of Quebec). In 1995 FEWQ hosted a national Library Summit, bringing together writers' associations from coast to coast.

FEWQ is, and will continue to be, grass-roots association whose programmes and priorities are determined

by its members. Informal get-togethers, work-shops and information exchange are as important as lobbying and funded programmes such as public readings, writers-in-schools and writers-in-libraries.

FEWQ compliments national associations of playwrights, poets, novelists, translators, periodical writers, screenwriters, editors, journalists, romance and mystery writers etc. FEWQ is open to all genres and many members also belong to the national associations of their genre(s), PUC, TWUC, LCP, UNEQ, PWAC, et al. FEWQ's membership criteria also permits new writers to join as associate members. FEWQ offers a home to all English-language writers living in Quebec, and the opportunity to touch base and share ideas.

FEWQ also represents members' interests to various levels of government and requests funding for programmes that benefit members. If you are an English-language writer living in Quebec, please return the attached membership form.

FEWQ

- maintains Montreal office
- sponsors an annual Joust for Words in Montreal and in other centres in the province
- organizes Canada Council readings for its members
- assists in grievances with editors and publishers
- offers a fee-for-use manuscript reading service
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- keeps you in touch with your writing colleagues across the province
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___ non-fiction ___ theatre

___ radio/tv ___ film/video

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ind ex

editorial

maybe it's not enough to announce we're open: "Bienvenue Aux Dames?" maybe we have to step outside, call you down & in: "hey honey, what cha doin' tonight? wanna slip into print?" so this guy walks into a bar, calls it "prostitution of the word." second guy walks in, says "the Greeks did it so it must be okay." and then this third

who **objects** to all this fucking around with words, i don't know. **object** wannabees. who we are casting out or aside. someone said you always do that, positively define what you are by excluding & negating. so we promise to keep deferring that definition, enter perpetual opening (sounds like roses, or Rilke) still it's not like we'll sleep with just anyone. is it **unreasonable** that some people's children find in this opening foreclosing? this third guy just can't seem to take a joke.

well **the universe is expanding** and if we sometimes seem fickle in our affects it's because there is so much good language out there to love and when we throw a party we really do hope all of our ex's will come, as well as all of our present & potential paramours — that's why we rent such big halls (and wear such skanky frocks.) that's not to say we expect everyone to get along or the experience to be entirely comfortable — but when have you been to a great party or book where that happened. and it was a great party and thank you muchly to those of you who were open and out &

leaving ourselves behind. with this issue Stephanie slips away and Dana as well, elsewhere and not quite out, i hope. this leaving spaces, and more rooms and selves to **come in**. please do

pat salah

index would like to thank Joanie Anderson, Jack Biswell, Buffy Bonanza, Andrew Brouse, Nick Carpenter, Colin Christie, Bradd Colbourne, Julie Crysler, Peter Dubé, Fluffy Pagan Echoes (Scott Duncan, Ran Elfassey, Justin McGrail, Victoria Stanton, Vince Tinguely), Ed Fuller, Glenn Gear, le Groupe de Poésie Moderne, Maeve Haldane, David Jager, Ummni Khan, Catherine Kidd, He-Jung Kim, Cameron McMaster, Erin Mouré, Ouma Seeks Ouzo, Revolting Developments (Debra Frankel, Joellen Housego), Second That Motion (Sara Porter, Louise Moyes, Miriam Ginestier), Gerry Shikatani, Anne Stone, Juliet Waters, Lion D'Or and danger! books, for their enthusiastic co-operation in putting together the **index** benefit cabaret on June 22.

next month

index will be on vacation until September 1st.



"We must make le plaisir more productive."

There are no simple solutions. Only intelligent poems

Word is

Shall I compare thee?

All this month and next, by far the most popular performance, and hottest book, not to be missed, is a summer's day. Hence the sudden decline in the number of listings in this index. To compensate, we're providing an extra dose of writing to read in the park, and will relax until everyone wakes again.

.wednesdays.july.readings

Who said she said summer sings steamy says...what? **SUMMER VOICES** reading series starts soon. (The Bistro 4 tradition continues and continues and continues.... **Sonja A. Skarstedt** has organized a tri-part series featuring NYC Poet **Michael Andre** and "Montreal's Empress of Words" **Ann Diamond** on the 5th, **Mohamud S. Togane** reading from *The Bottle* and *The Bushman* on the 12th, and **Endre Farkas** completing his *Surviving Words* cross-country tour on the 19th.

Tuesdays: July 4 Slam

& August 1 DeadPoetsSlam

VHS Fundraiser

SLAM has been defined as a "[severe closing of a door on one or more ill-shaped persons beating themselves vigorously or masquerading as damns]". Sound enticing? (See article: "A Short History of the Poetry Slam" on page 4 for a complete definition.)

SEX FILES? SEX PHILES?

is it multi-media xtravaganza of just the sort you've been waiting for? {confessional, contestatory? [it is poetry, music, dance, video, visual art, performance & a peep show... "the focus is not to educate but to stimulate alternate perspectives" Now that's enticing. Brought to you by *Push Comes To... Production Collective*. Tickets (for admission) are only \$5 and all proceeds go to the Centre for AIDS in Montreal (Women). The gig's @ Stornaway Gallery. Friday July 14.

In **"A Quebec Without Borders - A Canada Without Borders"** you can dance if you want to, 'cause it's your revolution... Make it your revolution & come celebrate **DiversCité** (it's where we live) with **OUTspoken women's reading and performance**, dancing to follow. An **Alta Voce Collective** presentation @ Club Lion D'Or, 1690 Ontario. (submissions and participation are welcome, see back page.) Friday August 4.

index magazine is an index to literature and performance events in Montréal, and a forum for new writing and debate. **index** is open

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Pat Salah

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LISTINGS

are free. Tell us about your event. Call (or fax) our office number, 495-1847. The deadline is five days before the beginning of the month when you would like the listing to appear.

LETTERS

are free too. We welcome your letters to the editor, about our magazine or any topic conceivably related to writing or the writing community; they will be featured on this page. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

SUBMISSIONS

are free, replies are not. Please send your prose, poetry, or textual hybrids to us, but include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Bear in mind our space limitations: under 3,000 decent-sized words. Non-fiction pieces or proposals are also welcome. We gladly accept submissions of anything for review.

ADVERTISING

is not free. We like to support other small organizations by offering reduced advertising rates to independent bookstores and small publishers. **index** magazine survives on ad revenue, so we need your support too. Call 495-1847.

CLASSIFIEDS

are almost free. **index** has a classified section where you'll find calls for submissions, contests, etc. The charge is 10¢/word.

index ONLINE

In co-operation with The Mirror, **index** is available online as a part of Babylon. Dial 393-1543 with your modem to log on to Babylon (check The Mirror if you need help), and look in The Arts for the **index** logo. You'll find regularly updated listings (and you can post your own), as well as articles from the current **index** and an online workshop where writers can share their work.

index magazine,

P.O. Box 42082

Montréal, Québec, H2W 2T3

(514) 495-1847

index@babylon.montreal.qc.ca

index is available at Le Stand, The Word, danger!, Paragraphe, The Double Hook, the Atwater Library, Coles, Café Phoenix, Fairmount Bagels, and other locations.

Tuesday, July 4

7:00 p.m. Chris Ware of ACME Novelty Company (Fantagraphics) will be signing comics at Nebula, 1832 Ste. Catherine St. West. 932-3920.

8:00 p.m. Vox Hunt, the official Montreal Poetry Slam. Special guests Fluffy Pagan Echoes, Fortner Anderson, Carol Margaret Davison. Bar Maître Renard, 4910 St. Laurent. \$2. 985-3208. *see feature* ■

Wednesday, July 5

8:00 p.m. Summer Voices Series. Ann Diamond and Michael Andre. Bistro 4, 4040 St. Laurent. info 935-7059 *see p. 3*

Thursday, July 6 – August 29

The Space Between II: a group show featuring text based installation art by Baco Ohama, from her book of poetry. Saidye Bronfman Centre, 5170 St. Catherine Rd. 739-2301.

Wednesday, July 7

Sapphist Extravaganza. Stornaway Gallery. 1407 St. Alexandre. for info: 288-7075

Wednesday, July 12

8:00 p.m. Summer Voices Series. Mohamud S. Togane reads. Bistro 4, 4040 St. Laurent. for info: 935-7059 *see p. 3*

Friday, July 14

8:00 p.m. Sexfiles. Push Comes To...Production Collective presents an evening of multi-media spectacle featuring the works of a collective of local young artists and performers. Proceeds go to Centre for AIDS of Montreal (Women). Stornaway Gallery, 1407 St. Alexandre. Vernissage @ 8pm, Show @ 10pm *sharp* \$5. info: 288-7075 *see p. 3*

Saturday, July 15

5:00 p.m. Shane Simmons signs Long Shot Comics: The Long And Unlearned Life Of Roland Gethers, the hugely successful minicomix, now carried by Slave Labour Press. Nebula, 1832 Ste. Catherine St. West. 932-3920

Sunday, July 16

7:00 p.m. Ghosts of the Revolution. Robespierre's cabaret hosted by Rufus Wainwright. 4-6 p.m. "Versailles garden Party" with food, refreshments, and a Baroque duo. Show @ 7 p.m. Chris Bell, Jonathan Fur, O.K. Theatre, Amanda Strawn (rap), Lasha De Sela (Spanish songs), Mariannick Beliveau (opera), Joe De Paul, Martha Wainwright and more. Cafe Sarajevo. 2080 Clark. \$5 advance. \$6 at door. Costumes encouraged (peasant or aristocrat).

Wednesday, July 19

8:00 p.m. Summer Voices Series. Endré Farkas reads. Bistro 4, 4040 St. Laurent. for info: 935-7059 *see p. 3*

Tuesday, August 1

8:00 p.m. The Vox Hunt Slam team (VHS) fundraising event. Dead Poets Slam (Walt Whitman vs. Sylvia Plath), Celebrity fetish auction. Bar Maître Renard, 4910 St. Laurent. 985-3208. *see feature* ■

Wednesday, August 2

7:00 p.m. WARM (Writer's Association for Romance and Mainstream) hosts a writing/critique/discussion group meeting. Call Jeanette Paul for details. 468-5410.

Friday, August 4

8:00 p.m. Alta Voce collective presents "A Québec without borders — A Canada without borders," an OUTspoken women's reading/performance evening of politicized creativity in celebration of DiversCité. Performances followed by a dance. Club Lion D'Or, 1690 Ontario. For info contact Heray at CKUT.

July 10 – August 11

Workshops offered through the Quebec Drama Federation in various disciplines: acting, playwrighting, directing, etc. For information call 278-3941.

That's all. *I don't think of it that often.*

A Short History of the Poetry Slam

by Stanley Todd Swift

SLAM!

Sounds a bit much, don't you think? The idea of associating poetry readings, judges and cash prizes with a monosyllable, and one with such sh(l)ock value, is dubious. How did this happen? Did the Vox Hunt people think it up by themselves? That would be embarrassing! But no. Before the history of the sport itself (or game, if you prefer) let us investigate the history of the word.

As all good essayists do, let us refer to the Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (the one with the magnifying glass in the little drawer). This esteemed book gives all sorts of definitions for "slam": 1. A severe blow; a violent impact; 2. A violent closing of a door; etc., producing a loud resounding noise; the noise so made, or a noise of this nature; 3. The fact of losing or winning all the tricks in a game of cards; esp. in whist; 4. An ill-shaped person; 5. To beat or slap vigorously; 6. To beat by winning a slam, to trump. To beat completely; 7. A substitution for damn.

Here we see the origins of the present-day use. To slam poetry one must make a "violent impact" on the audience and judges, given the three-minute time limit. The poetry produced is a "resounding noise" — one that hopefully echoes throughout the mind-and-body house. It is a game of trying to win by tricks and trumpery; and if one slams a poem well, then the proper response might very well be "hot damn!" Only the fourth, concerning "ill-shaped" persons seems troubling, however, given the freakery that such open contests invite, not too far off the mark. What is important to note is that slam is noun and verb. One goes to a Slam in order to slam, and if one slams one's poem well, one has slammed the other slammers. In the history of arcane lingo, this must win top prize for most limited.

Slams started in Chicago — spice up poetry open-mikes and like the discovery of poutine, the serendipity was sublime and simple. With added prizes and diving competition cards the excitement was born. Now most American cities have slam teams; and bi-weekly slams, which encourage both trad poets and spoken-word divas to jostle for three-minutes of fame. Winners of big events even appear on MTV! Every year there is the US "National Poetry Slam."

Like most things in America, this is a misnomer. Surprisingly and unlike the World Series of baseball, the National Poetry Slam is actually more inclusive than its name suggests. Teams from Russia (bring your own interpreters) competed last year. This year's event is to be held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 9-12. One of 24 teams competing will be Montreal's Vox Hunt team: the 1st from Eastern Canada (yeah, there was a Vancouver team, but that's almost Seattle).

It is more than vanity, stressing the Vox Hunt (Jasmine Chatelain, Dan C. Mitchell, Todd Swift organizers — Hi Mom!) part because teams must be designated as coming from an established venue with an "accredited" adherence to the official rules. Yes, there is an official governing body who meet several times a year to hammer out devils in the details: things like how many points should be deducted for every ten seconds over time and what constitutes a prop (is a top hat a prop? A bow tie? A ball gown? Yes to all three).

So far, the Vox Hunt Slam team (VHS) consists of David Jager, Julie Crysler and Mark Pekar, each a slam winner (our alternate is Sabrina Mandell, two-time runner-up) and honorary judge Ed Fuller. The July 4th show will see the last spot go to the July Slam Champion. On August 1st Vox Hunt will hold a fund-raiser for the team, featuring a "dead poet's slam" — Walt Whitman vs Sylvia Plath (props welcome) and a spoken-word celebrity fetish auction (Joelle Ciona's blow-torch, etc.).

The Ann Arbor slam will be a challenge, since the defending Boston champs and the always Jurassic New York runner-ups will be in contention. The way it'll work is a rocket-science cinch: The VHS team will compete against two other cities on Aug. 9. Each team-member will alternate with a slammer from another team. Every slammer gets just one shot — one poem. Scores are tallied, ranking given. Two such threesomes will occur at each of the four venues that night. Same format Aug. 10. Then on Aug. 11, the top eighteen teams will compete to move on to the finals. On the last day, the top four remaining cities will vie for the prize (1st place is \$2,000 US). There will also be prizes for individual slammers.

The VHS team has a very good chance of making it to the third round, but bets are off after that. Out of a possible score of 120 per round (30 points perfect score per slammer) New York averaged 116 last year — you do the math. Our slammers have been averaging 24 points to win, which is a respectable 96, but with room for practice. Our team heads down to Boston July 12th to go head-to-head against the previous National Champs for a dry run. Couldn't have a better

BAPTISM OF FIRE...hot damn!

VOX HUNT

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June 26 to July 7 *Minus Time* by Catherine Bush. **July 10 to July 21** *Remains Of The Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro. **July 24 to August 18** *The Stone Diaries* by Carol Shields. **August 21 to Sept. 1** *Bachelor Brothers' Bed And Breakfast* by Bill Richardson.

CINQ-FM presents **Stanley Asher reviewing Books on Popular Culture Themes**.

July 1 *The Good Vibrations Guide To Sex; Going Abroad—European Travel In 19th Century American Culture; Principles Of Adaptation for Film & Television*. **July 8** *From Metal To Mozart; Captain Trips—A Biography Of Jerry Garcia; The Best Of Ontario*. **July 15** *Baba—A Return to China On My Father's Shoulders; Binky's Guide To Love*. **July 22** *Roger Ebert's Video Companion, 1995 Edition; The Book Of Video Lists; The Universal Almanac*. **July 29** *Cobb, the life and times of the*

meanest man who ever played baseball; As Seen On TV—The Visual Culture Of Everyday Life In The 1950s; Images In The Dark—An Encyclopedia Of Gay And Lesbian Film and Video. **August 5** *Swing Changes—Big Band Jazz in New Deal America; World Music—The Rough Guide*. **August 12** *Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the U.S.; Encyclopedia of Canadian Rock, Pop, & Folk Music*. **August 19** *The Top 500 Poems; The Casablanca Man—Cinema of Michael Curtiz; Narrative in Culture—the Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*. **August 26** *Ploughshares, Winter 1994-95—Regrets Only; Sisterfire—Black Womanist Fiction and Poetry; 1995 Information Please Almanac*.

CBC Radio presents **Writers & Company**, with host Eleanor Wachtel speaking to literary figures from all over the world.

July 2 Joan Brady, author of *Theory of War*. **July 9** American novelist Reynolds Price, author of *A Whole New Life*. **July 16** Carolyn Forché. **July 23** E.L. Doctorow. **July 30** Ryszard Kapuscinski. **August 6** Selina Hastings, Rohinton Mistry. **August 13** David Grossman. **August 20** Marina Warner. **August 27** Tim O'Brien. **September 3** Harold Bloom, author of *The Western Canon*.

CKUT presents **Stanley Asher reviewing Books on Jewish Themes**.

July 4 *The Brown Plague*, by Daniel Guerin; *Cleansing the Fatherland*. **July 11** *The Women's Bible Commentary*, by Carol A. Newsom & Sharon H. Ringe; *Found Treasures—Stories by Yiddish Women Writers*. **July 18** *Binab—Vol. 3, Jewish Intellectual History in the Middle Ages; The Kosher Pig*. **July 25** *Goebbels*, by Ralf Georg Ruth; *Ending Auschwitz*, by Marc H. Ellis. **August 1** *Nuremberg Forty Years Later; The Buchenwald Report*. **August 8** *Making Stones, Making Selves—Feminist Reflections on the Holocaust; The Book of Intimate Grammar* (novel). **August 15** *Defenders of the Race; The Jewish Alchemists*. **August 22** *Jews for Sale, Behind the Border*. **August 29** *Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter; In a Hotel Garden* (novel).

CKUT presents **Literature Montreal**, with hosts Richard Weintrager, Scott Duncan, & Vince Tinguely speaking with literary figures from Montreal and across Canada.

July 7 Russell Banks, author of *Rule of the Bone*. **July 14** Martin Amis, author of *The Information*. Other interviews to be announced.

Programme	Station	Time	Host	Content
Literature Montreal	CKUT 90.3 FM	Friday 6PM	Richard Weintrager, Scott Duncan, Vince Tinguely.	
Grey Matters	CKUT 90.3 FM	Thursday 7-8PM	Fortner Anderson.	Lectures.
Dromostexte	CKUT 90.3 FM	Thursday 8-9PM	Fortner Anderson.	Top 40 Spoken Word
Books on Jewish Themes	CKUT 90.3 FM	Tuesday 7PM	Stanley Asher	Reviews. see above.
Simply Speaking	CINQ 102.3 FM	Saturday 10:00AM	Stanley Asher	Interviews. see above.
Books on Popular Culture	CINQ 102.3 FM	Saturday 9:30AM	Stanley Asher	Reviews. see above.
Between the Covers	CBC 940 AM	Monday—Friday 10:15PM	Serialized novel readings.	see above.
Saturday Spotlight	CBC 940 AM	Saturday 5:08PM	Shelley Pomerance	Arts in Quebec.
Writers & Company	CBC 940 AM	Sunday 3PM	Eleanor Wachtel	Literary figures. see above.
Book Banter	CJAD 800AM	see above.	Stuart Nulman	Reviews. see above.
Selected Shorts	WCPE 91.9 FM	Thursday 11AM	Actors read short stories by acclaimed authors.	
Word Jazz	WCPE 91.9 FM	Thursday 11PM	Ken Nordine	Melodies of the mind.
Tell Me A Story	WCPE 91.9 FM	Friday 7 PM	Contemporary authors reading from their work.	
Voices and Visions	WCPE TV Ch.57	Friday 11AM	Documentary profiles of 20th century American poets.	

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Halogen Haze

Lydia Jaworski

Yesterday it tried to make me drown

myself in the kitchen sink.

Today I just want to be able to fuck the way they do but I'd have to drink dishsoap just to feel it coming back

up to get any intensity out of anything at all. Looking at that Halogen street lamp, it comes up like a grit taste - bringing it all out and closing the circle.

It wasn't the space suit or those space-craft-garbàge-bucket-boots with the egg-crate-coat-hanger-limbs with tinsel hanging off them with used and unopened restaurant size ketchup packets meticulously pinned on the inlay.

It was knowing that we never had a chance.

Somehow this was in the eyes - painted a full inch all the way around - bleary bug eyes - magnet black. Everywhere she looks is black-framed like looking out and up through an underwater basement window.

The ghoul could cut and edit life scenes by squinting and chop-blinking.

That same night were dreams.

Sometimes in different animal shapes but always with that soft papery voice. He comes out first - the director. "Hurry, hurry you want a good seat. The performance is starting!" He whispers close by somewhere. "Sounds like someone smoking a cigarette of crushed velvet, a tiny sound deep inside the inner ear. Don't think about it or you'll stop listening! It changes to air . . . air swishing against the plastic film ribbon. It's an old movie, isn't it? Oh look . . . she's naked! Or it seems so . . . her shapes don't look right . . . not roped up like that . . . slumped like that" he coos.

Something jerks and moves and displaces. The camera eye pans across. Stopping and resuming. Walking. Over the form of the woman drying on the stone couch. From the back, her labia appear contracted and closed. Dried gray dish rags. The eye moves, pauses and zooms in - close-up into her eyes. Persistent embers. Marbles or ground glass with a fleeting glow of panic, as if



Photo by Marie-Hélène Parent.

they only recently gave up. Just above their heads, her thoughts can be read in all the languages of the universe, but it's better to see them. She's already webbing from the inside, meshing outward. Extinguished. She tries to pull her head back, away from the stone, but it doesn't work. All the pieces don't go with her. Funny-shaped strips of face and tongue harden on the naked rock. Large red spiders carry some of the pieces away. The face on the stone is different from her face - it's become my face now. Everyone can see she is upset by this. The performance ended.

I woke up chop-blinking.

Some drugs make it so I don't remember the dreams. I can feel them through the day, the taste of something indistinguishable. A ground up spider in the back of my throat.

A wad of mucous-tinged saliva tasted of seasalt when I looked away from the ghoul and into the subway lights. I knew I swallowed some memory that was already fading. Marika was saying it irritated her, that the halogen made her feel artificial and dirty. She passed off the ghoul as some club kid or funky prostitute. Then she lowered her shades at me like 'what?'

The ghoul got off at Fullerton, linked arm with a freakier woman. Someone's grandmother who didn't realize, like when Frankenstein visits the blind farmer. The ghoul was the woman's inner monster somehow materialized.

The first sign is to see it in others.

The ghoul sat down with the woman and lay across her lap. Strange pieta. And all I could see went magnet black.

I looked at the plexiglass seat back in front of me and searched for a raised emblem. Evidence of a company name - some kind of grounding. The train started up. I took a look before going into the tunnel: The window framed them for a second before it hit the black. We locked eyes, and I felt her insides were like cotton candy all strung up, drenched in a hideous red.

I saw my face, her aversion to human and, worst of all, both of us knowing.

I see the ghoul's eyes inside my lids when they are closed and tired, and I wonder about her route and her fall.

I have money, all that I want. And a place downtown on the waterfront. Sometimes I have moments I can hardly explain. Some kind of giddy madness that takes me into a foreign time and place of danger. A space of furniture and decay like running into outrageousness with open arms and eyes. It happens when I think I'll get up and wash my face - brush my hair. I see myself on the phone calling the university about an application. I use the voice of someone who could be satisfied by such things. Then the meshing spirals outward, and I'm comforted by my

grounding and identity.

The art of grieving my own kind.

Sometimes my mind speeds and falls backward to show me the fear story again and again. I weaken, and I can't stop the images.

His hands were places face down on the desk, the tops were tanned darker than his face. His pupils contracted and opened showing me the slow projection of images: recliner, cocktail, newspaper, house addition, tile cleaner, and a man and a woman in a bedroom for years. Then I saw the doctor tiny inside his own eyes, on the recliner with the metronome on the mantle inaudible to his smiling ears. A time warp. A land of slow motion and decay.

He said the words again as if I didn't hear them. Slower, with a gluey film of paste snapping from his lips - the same words. This time my arms grew long, and I tried

to push the words back into his mouth. It was only imagination. I went over to him and put my hand on him, unzipped him, and wrapped my mouth around it. Years of pirouettes en attitude and port de bras also worked my throat muscles. Maybe this will work. He will talk-breathe out "Ballerina I'm a fool . . . nothing is wrong . . . untrue words! . . . your knees are not damaged . . . they are exquisite, exquisite and should last forever!"

And I removed my mouth and dance tape. I wound it round and round his mouth, arms moving rapidly, webbing. Dashed past the front desk and didn't pay. Through the revolving doors which opened into a hideous reddening sky. I walked - ran - then sprang using the strength in my exquisite knees and flew and ran until I was only flying above the heads of the street people. Cool soft cotton air whipping my body. I swallowed it in dizzying gulps of laughter. Still seeing his words closed mouth under the tape - forever sealed.

I go higher and higher, above the heads, traffic lights, flagpoles, chimneys, and down, as if breaking over the top of a Ferris wheel into the old Studebaker building. Inside of me pounds in accord with Prokofiev as his music floats out of the polished windows. I choose a window to fly through and hear the pounding of her foot with the pounding within me and then the yelling. My feel land smoothly and silently by the toe, then the ball of the foot, before the heel on the freshly worked and newly rosined cherrywood and the light is bright and warm and the mirror reflects a golden hue around my knees and the lashes continue in 3-4 time and the screaming in Russian while spilling droplets of her chai onto the beautiful glistening wood.

"And what's this! Movie star has arrived. What happened to the back? No arms, no legs, and chin scraping the floor! Your derriere hits me in the face! Or have you become strip-dancer? Woman with large kitchen? No, circus horse! You think you could fly through the

window to impress me? I want to see plie and strong and good and now!"

Then she laughed and embraced me because it's been two weeks . . . but the music stopped. No sliding and settling and accommodating of cherrywood against my Niccolinis. My feet are restrained and flattened against human shoes. I plod horselike on cement and dirt and other common ground.

Each time I hit the wall, I feel a funhouse inside me. A Ferris wheel with my creaky seat at the top just about to break over a starlit ocean. My head feels good when I'm doing it. When I stop, there's a blood taste in me.

I got a television.

And a VCR.

I can watch and edit horrible life scenes, examine people from the street. Clove cigarettes give the films a dreamy quality. Eucalyptus tea smoke issues into my lungs and floats before the screen images in front of me. I look at them through distant clouds.

This fills in the time between the funhouse.

But there is a third space in the freezing alleyway outside sedative warmth.

Thoughts come to me in the form of a blind woman carrying a breadbasket of spiders. It shows me over and over how it happened. How my knee softened, didn't want to hold me during the fourth pirouette - only the fourth. I hit the floorboards and landed, heavily, humanly.

On two feet.

And the first time it was a joke and I went along as if I'd pulled a chair out from beneath myself. I didn't feel the dropping and the weakening or the flash of white nerve flying from the knee to thigh into labia up through my spine into my back. The place where their eyes had fallen, knowing. The second time I returned to the ground, they came.

The most beautiful first.

Jennifer. Alabaster legs and lightning battement. Mila. Arms and neck and chin and back. Then they all come to me bringing what they have, unable to discard it in my wake. Ethereal cooing while moving their powerful wings about me. I looked at the corner, on our box of rosin. An angry spider was shaking its way across the top. Burial of the broken. My labia become small at the thought and dried up into my uterus. Jennifer drew closer and put her wet, soft, seemingly boneless arms as strong as steel around me. Strong battement is she - I knew the spider was laughing.

I saw another specialist today. The same words from many faces - Seattle, California, New York, and Chicago Orthopaedic.

Once I saw them as if I was looking in from the outside. Framed window vision showed me the inverse and their forms made me ill and fevery and wild. With a shake of my head they returned. Jen and Josef move as if made from synthetic elastic steel. They glide in time with Slava's chords. Sea creatures taken from the depths of Atlantis. Ghosts from an ancient memory - materialized.

The family sent me to the best.

I crawled on the floor for him. Barking.

This one specialized in Moonies, de-programming. And for a while I thought he was good - strong chin. He almost led me into his view, but then he didn't have an answer.

He asked me to accept the inverse and I asked him to accept the inverse.

To get on all fours as I walk on two feet. To crawl. "How long can you dot it?" I asked. "How many months can you be a dog?"

Silence.

I've been a dog for three months now, using foreign strained movements at all times. I envy dogs because they have dog brains and dog hearts and I have a dancer's brain and dancer's heart in a dog's body.

When I used to breathe, we used to breathe together. In corps de ballet. Jennifer, Marika, Mila, Josef, Anna, Joshua, Danielle. Danielle's rib cage was little larger, it

would take her longer to exhale.

Marika looks diffused in the clouds. Small in the television. Long electrical legs made of some alien stone, polished and worked to be powerful yet soft and moist and flexible as an odalisque. She is linked arm with another dancer. I can't recall her face, bone bleached, pale, even for a dancer, foreshadowing . . .

I stop the videotape.

Living is to see this, and I wonder how fantasy or thought can be outside of this. I think that everything from the outside is not, it is inverse, edited.

In dreams I saw the witch, cretonne odor with that huge bird. Walking toward me from somewhere far away. Heavy gait. Gray orthopaedic shoes, slacks and blouse. I knew her face under the shroud - her weak chin. We were born at the same time. I sped up - she kept pace. Creeping, affecting my body peripherally through others.

Marika had a knee scare.

Months later, I would still watch her knee at the barre during ronde de jambe. It quivered a little en l'air. I kissed that knee. Skin salt. Losing my mouth on hope I imagined a miniature tenacious octopus holding her tendons together. Then Josef would hold her knee as if in some kind of trance, and Jennifer would watch us all, indifferently brushing my hair as if she was immune to all harm.

That knee would affect our whole body and it became all things. I sucked the venom out of her only to become poisoned myself.

The witch was dormant, a strip of smoke-smelling wool in the borders of my dreams. Waiting. Then she killed Marika during the wait.

There were signs after the knee healed. Early signs - wide hands and wide at the base of the skull. At sixteen, Marika's hips began to soften and move outward like those of a small woman from the street. Her breasts swayed when she pulled off her leotard and we looked away in the lockerroom - while looking. And we realized Marika had a weak mind. If you thought for them, thought hard enough, they wouldn't grow.

She wore tight brassieres, but their weight showed through. More warnings, men from the street - looking. Sometimes they shouted things, and out of love and pity I yelled back at them as if it was for me. Degrading myself, as if I was the one who was becoming mortal.

For two years it went on - the growth.

It was three hours after a rain. The worst possible conditions. Hot, muggy, grayish yellow outside the studio windows. Our bones and ligaments and tendons revolting. No arms, no legs, no timing, and Madame Vara limping from her girlhood injuries and with one of her headaches. Madame Vara then throwing her chair. Calling us beggars, side-show performers, and married-human-female-woman with a house and children and dishsoap. And it was almost as if we could believe her. My own body possessed, throwing me into the foul-smelling tunnel. I saw myself in the dark with that soft pregnant body, stretched organs, pulled ligaments. Washing at the sink with a television sound in the background of that house. My children come home with peanut-butter-and-jelly faces, little aliens, sports jerseys - letters - speaking some unintelligible language. One husband and sex with one body for years and all of me one.

We all felt this, as if we would be forced to abandon each other. And the orgies would end, bodies of bacon with a quivering layer of corpse-flesh. Overripe. Touching becomes a horror movie.

On that day, Marika moved slow with an extra movement in her battement and her arms all brise' and her breasts danced in time to a distant music.

It was as if domesticity had hold of Marika. Madame Vara threw her little gold chair out the window for 'effect' - she asked us to fetch it for her from the alley, but later. No response. Madame approached Marika and pulled out one breast. As if showing us the source of contamination, she whispered, so softly with closed teeth, "Circus."

I changed like lightning that day and didn't wait for Marika. Running down the steps of the Fine Arts building as if I could escape.

Some say Marika became a ghoul.

I saw the witch. She came out into the street - more than once. Stationary in a crowd of ordinary people.

Then the knee pains started - started in me.

I rented a love story and really smoked up the front of the screen. Lots of Pepsi and small yellow pills. That woman with heavy breasts looks as is she gapingly defied aesthetics and made up her own perverse rules. Life without a monster. She's grieving the loss of a lover. Sorrow over sentiment. I grieve now because I can't grieve like her. I'd need to drink dishsoap to feel it coming back up to get any intensity out of anything at all.

Her face, having felt, settled.

I'm softening to it. My skin is getting that odor of gangrene and preservative from the street. The more my body softens, the more I feel its anger. Yesterday it threw plates and I cut my hands as it threw them. Then it tried to make me drown myself in the kitchen sink, trying to speed things up. The ghoul knows it's dying within me.

Halogen light issues in and reflects off my arms and hands.

Streetlamp. Outside the window.

That man moves with an awkward precision. In darkness, I barely make out the lines. Moving toward the light I know. Dust particles illuminate it, beyond comprehension, beyond hacked-open knees. His monster, its immensity - no chance - never. It rides on his back and strangles him and makes him the drunken hunchback with the wide gait, arms extended. His red ember eyes sweep and search the alleyway. Glow lights in the dark. The glow sweeps over me, and our faces meet.

In the future it will be the same light on my arms.

Marika took quotes from Alice in Wonderland. Quotes to inspire us, keep us going through the screaming and studio sweat.

"Begin at the beginning, the king said gravely. Then go on until you get to the end - then stop."

Once I took my first step with the toe, then ball and heel of my foot and all was pleasing to their eyes and my eyes were pleased. I heard its voice from somewhere close up and far away and it sang out to me that this was the beginning.

This is the strangest part of the story, that a moth can be two islands, one thickly infested and incestuous, a beacon for new colonists, and the other seemingly identical but forbidden and uninhabited, two islands so similar but separate, flying side by side through the dark of night...

—Adrian Forsyth
on the selective
dispersal of
ear mites.

Dom will leave me in an old Ford pick-up, dragging the coffin behind. I've known since the beginning. So when the time comes, it is Tab's body that I offer him. Because of the way good-bye flutters on her mouth, like a butterfly.

But Tab isn't saying goodbye. Twiggy is speaking. She is telling me that I am a whore. Twiggy — but that's not her name really, that's just what Tab and I call her, for the scant line of her lip and arc of her spine — Twiggy is trying her hand at allegory.

"Ya'know, ya'know what its like, a woman acts as she does and she thinks that they like her, but really they're laughing at her. Really, they think she's a whore, and they say as much when she's not around."

Twiggy's nose is quivering. The nostrils are tiny hollow eyes, like a dead snake might have, or a skull. Twiggy is telling me the story thru her nose, but I'm only half-listening. Over her shoulder I can see her man. His slow brown eyes are probing mine, offering mute reassurances.

Twiggy follows my look to its source, Phil. His face becomes stone. He turns away. Leaving me to sully defeat in the pale skin of his back. I turn to Twiggy and reproduce her stare, dead snake-eyes and shadow. She is angry, not because I understand her, but because she understands Phil.

"If you act like a whore, even if you're not —" she doesn't believe her own words, but considers it tactful, necessary, to leave me an out, "no one is going to respect you. You come along broke, and the men, they pay for you, but really they're laughing."

I am smiling at Twiggy, disarming her. Incredulously, I

The Moth-Girl Archetype



Photo by Marie-Hélène Parent.

tell her how stupid those whores are — "like they wouldn't even know it if you told them to their faces." I tell her that we are different. We understand the subtleties, we know men, and know what they want. I am laughing my lonesome cowboy laugh as I say, "that was quite a party I had with Phil last night, tho I can't recall ever invitin' you."

Twiggy rises and shakes her head. The others are laughing, and she thinks that they are laughing because I am too stupid to understand her, but they are laughing because she caught her man and me in the bathroom last night, because of the way she burst in on the laughter like a fury, stopping it dead. The others are laughing because when Twiggy laughs, she emits the sound of a slow dry suck. And how can you do anything but laugh at that?

Dom holds my hand. He lights little fire-crackers as we go, throwing them to our left and right, before and beside us. We walk thru minute explosions. Dom heard all that Twiggy had to say. So he walks me thru fire. And asks me to marry him.

The path narrows. The heady scent of a single night bloomer is buried beneath the stifling smell of sulphur. I am barefoot. If I step too far to the left or right, the earth might suddenly explode beneath my feet.

Dom will take my hand. Dom will lead me forward. He holds a fire-cracker in his left hand, lifts it to the cigarette dangling on his lip. For as long as Dom will hold my hand, I will walk safely thru the hotly burning cinders, thru blue flames and sulfurous green smoke.

Dom owns this world. First of all, because it is his parents' country home, and second of all, because Dom owns everything. When people arrive, Dom performs; he sits in his father's goat-head chair and provokes. Everyone cowers under — hoping not to draw his acid tongue. When I arrive on Friday, a whole new element is up, one I am not familiar with. But my status among the newcomers is assured when Dom pulls me into his lap, palms some acid, and tells me to laugh.

Tab isn't here this weekend. I was supposed to stay away from Dom's with her. But when Vinny pulled up, I tossed my bags in with him. Tab will forgive me, tho for a time she will be peakish. Our contrived absence was her way of punishing Dom for sleeping thru that first time. Afterwards, she led me out of the cabin to the dock. We watched the slow moving stars as she described it. She said that she was on top, and Dom was pumping — that she was about to cum when she heard Dom snoring — he kept pumping and she came alone.

the sun rise. When we returned, the couch was occupied by another couple. I could hear Dom snoring from the bedroom, so I led Jimmy in.

We laid up on either side of Dom, quietly luxuriating in the sheets of his King-sized bed and watching him sleep.

Dom shook the windows and rattled the glass on the floors. His nose, seared by coke, was like the surface of the moon. Jimmy and I talked of biology and cilia, but when Dom snored and the thick mucous rattled in his throat, Jimmy and I became sick with laughter. The phlegmy sound of it wore on us and we found we couldn't sleep. We spent the rest of the morning wandering from tent to tent, looking for a quiet place to lay up.

When Matt rose from his tent, Jimmy and I took his place. Matt looked hurt, but as I said, a girl's got to sleep. I laughed because Matt's look meant that he remembered. He had known me since I was a knob-kneed and ugly little thing, and tho I'd always wanted him, he hadn't given me a glance. When he returned from college and stayed at Dom's city apartment, I slipped into his room and made love to him. It was his first time. He was slow and awkward — more like convulsions than loving. So I turned him over and rode him, performed really, made a circus of the act. Dom looked in on us and laughed, because Matt had that dazed look, like he'd never fully awoken. Matt just went from dreaming to loving to dreaming again. I'd arrived at Dom's flat after Matt was asleep, and left before he awoke. Dom considered the whole episode comic, so he told the others to act like nothing had happened.

This time nothing happened — Jimmy and I fell into a disordered heap of dreamless sleep. Jimmy didn't mind Matt thinking otherwise, tho. He was still sullen over that time Vinny had been aching for me at the bar. Jimmy put me up to my old tricks. He said he'd buy me a drink for it. They'd all gathered to watch. I strolled up to Vinny and rubbed myself against him, smiling, saying: "C'mon Vinny, give me some honey, why don't we slip out now. You've been holding out on me too long." Vinny turned pale and the blood rushed from his face to his little bean. I laughed and said: "sucker."

Then I returned to Jimmy, and got my drink. I let my hands wander over him. "C'mon Jimmy," I said, "I done for you, now why don't you do for me?" When the little vein on Jimmy's forehead throed purple, I rose up, opening his hard hot lap to everyone's laughter.

Later, I would sidle up to Vinny again. I wanted to make it alright with Jimmy. I'd apologize to Vinny, tell him that Jimmy had put me up to it, that I'd humiliated Jimmy just for him. Then I'd lose my hands in the tan fold of his pants and say: "C'mon, ain't nobody watching, let's just slip out." Vinny would be pale as a parsnip, his little bean mounting up that tan fold and — we'd all laugh, Jimmy hardest of all. I couldn't let Vinny think he'd won. Even if

he was my second cousin.

Vinny was living in the wet suit. We had the boat up and running and he had been the first to put it on. Vinny had been wearing it for two days, and there wasn't a single one of us who would wear it after him. They had taken me out on the water-skies. Dom was driving the boat. I couldn't get my legs to straighten up. I held onto the rope because my hands were set in rictus and I couldn't let go. I'd nearly drowned. They had to stop the boat while Vinny dove in and pried my hands from the handle. I couldn't let go to swim.

When they pulled me into the boat, Dom handed me the bottle. I tried to drink the sour taste down with vodka. A little blotter of acid had adhered to Dom's sweaty thumb. I licked it down, but wound up seeing my face as blue as a corpse — features slowly eroding, collapsing into my neck. Late that night, I went into the bathroom and tried to reconfigure my face from memory. The acid had stolen even the slash of a smile from my face. When Phil found me, I was painting myself with foundation, trying to add cheekbones to the illusion of white slate. He knew that I was dreaming I was gone again, and laughed. I started to paint my acid dreams on him, erasing his features with foundation. He grabbed up the bottle and poured it onto his palms, painting me. Then Twiggy broke thru the door, staring at us til our laughter died and our hands went limp and the flesh dripped from our chins like an accusation.

I towelled my face dry. Twiggy washed my hallucinations from Phil's face, leaving the slack O of a mouth, the bare features of an apology. She washed Phil clean of laughter. Her hands were practical about it too, she didn't dare accuse with her hands, but broke him down with practiced tidiness.

I thought I knew Phil, but couldn't quite understand why he had let Twiggy tame him. My heart was beating out of my chest, because I thought that Phil and I were going to be friends. But after seeing Twiggy's hands, I knew that if it had been Phil on the boat, he'd have let me drown.

When Dom asked me to marry him, I let go of the safety belt in the palm of his hand and ran back the way I had come. They'd all seen me leave with Dom and thought that it was settled. Twiggy spat on the bonfire when she saw me return alone. Phil cast baffled looks at the ground. Matt fired up the jeep, and I jumped in. Jimmy and a guy named Pete, who did drywall, climbed into the back. We went four-wheeling across country until I told them to stop. I got in the driver's seat. Jimmy and Matt were laughing at me for wanting to drive. So I took the jeep thru the woods, not even feeling the burns on the sole of my foot as I pressed down the accelerator.

They continued to laugh. I opened the throttle and steered for a tree. They stopped laughing when the jeep careened to a halt a dime's breadth from the oak. I put her in park and got out. Let them clean up, I thought, cursing. But they were dead silent. Later, Jimmy wandered back dazed and bloody. The drywall guy was laid out in a ditch, unconscious.

It took them two hours to find him in the moonlight, but by then he was moaning, and they just had to follow the slow dying sound.

Twiggy telephoned Tab and picked her up at the bus station. When I came in from the woods, Tab was curled in Dom's lap. She was wearing the same moth-girl suit she'd worn in our seventh grade recital. I had been a peach. Dom's face was so radically different in the firelight, that I could no longer picture him as he had been earlier, at sunset. I knew the next time we were alone, his face would change.

They had turned Pete's bloody face to the fire, propping his torso up against a stump. His head was wrapped in a dirty towel, his hands were bandaged to a vodka bottle. I lifted the half-empty pack of cigarettes from his pocket, the lighter from his jeans, and wandered down to the dock. Phil followed after me. But the last thing I wanted was Phil's company, so I hid in the shadows, where Tab

found me. She shook her head at Phil and told him to get back to Twiggy. Then she sat down by me, wiping the blood from my face, and telling me it would all be alright.

We looked out over the still dead lake, wondering out loud how far you could swim out before dying, counting stars, and smoking the last of Pete's cigarettes. Tab told me to wait half an hour before joining her and Dom to sleep. The last time that I'd joined them, I'd awoken in a haystack — a sticky sweet something in my mouth. But it was Tab's hair; she'd passed a terrible night in the company of drunk-snakes and dreams that were teased thru the mad tangle of her hair — until she cut them away. She pulled row upon row of yellow hair from her skull, cutting it in discernable stripes, creating the illusion of a derelict corn field.

When I came in, Tab was floating over Dom, riding him, her wings spread taut, like a bird about to fly. She was floating a full six inches over his naked body, and, for a minute, I thought it strange. But I was still wearing my fat peach suit, so who was to say. That sticky sweet something hardened in my throat, drying out — words becoming raspy, tired. My body was suspended inside the swollen belly of a peach. I tried to cut myself free of the peach suit, but moth wings were wildly fluttering and Dom was screaming. Dom was covered in blood and screaming, snatching at hands from behind me and shrieking, while wings fluttered over us. And Tab, Tab was singing from the chorus.

calgary, part one

{first written as vancouver
last autumn but
reproduction is sometimes
less meiosis

embedded more
in a correspondence
invisible.

in these snowing seconds
new flesh

surface.)

silent paleness
inflected with two new lines
igniting a bowl of sky.

two more
flash like scissors
a lightning storm
in daylight calgary.

imagine:
versing on the thrill of being

alone

to watch this.
subtract a subject
from a predicate too familiar
messiah from crucifix
for example

it diffuses
touches the finite.

i thought there could be no place
like vancouver
& there is.

after moving away and to
as happens year after year
it feels like only size
changes

the same way somebody else's
high school yearbook
holds your friends
in different bodies, motions.
terror when sometimes i find

another me.

but in calgary nothing
hindered the sky surround-
no two suns
no twin clouds.

a landscape's individual.

when the minutes sink there
it's not molecular, the sun
blurred
smearing molten across the horizon.

there is nowhere like calgary
more mysterious because.

{incidentally
this metaphor extended
to someone
& was created with this
singular purpose:}

six months later in montreal

the velocity
is pure momentum with her
a glorious sign of

change rarely seen
here inside.

{last night
the last night of 1994

is a page thinking of her
a final breath of

daydreams
unless the deepening of it all
turns these next lines into
fictions

prairie baked
story flesh
like sometimes happens
with uncertainty

here i would like it
to not.

this is real:}

when she and i went to Rose's potluck
she likened me to Alan Alda
convinced us i would be
husband, father
someday positively.

the honest came in
a bowl of pumpkin pie
when fall came and went

left the mystery of following fates
to montreal
to blur like sun
in an icicle.

in between two conditions
ice & water
montreal & vancouver
is calgary

to carry in future lines
that are still too naive

for carrying anything more
than fictions

{there might not be two parts.

/ changing
the way i write :

Moth

Gilbert Salvador

ZEH MOT

An open letter to white people who want to visit India. from Ummni Khan

May 22, 1995

Dear white people,

How are you? I'm doing okay. Yesterday, I biked up the mountain for the first time. Cool eh?, I didn't think I could do it. I hear you want to visit India. That's neat, my parents are Indian you know, they grew up there. So, how come you want to visit India? Is there a Buddhist Temple you've studied in university and are dying to experience live, feel the texture of the statues you've only seen in pictures? Maybe you've heard the people are as warm as the sun is there. Europe is a bit passé, I know, that was a place you wanted to visit before you read the Bhagavad Gita, the Kama Sutra, Bharti Muckerjee, Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje; before you saw "A Passage to India," "City of Joy," or "Ghandi" - you know, the one with Ben Kingsley. Did you see "Mississippi Masala?" God that sex scene between Denzel Washington and that long haired, golden skinned, voluptuous Indian chic was so fucking hot. Do white people have that kind of sex? What was that actress's name?... I can't remember.

I do remember every other summer, my family would visit India or Pakistan. To be honest I'm actually half Pakistani. - Oh, Pakistan is the country just west of India, where Benazir Bhutto lives, you know the really beautiful one. Pakistan is the place you're not going to have time to visit. Well, all you know of that place is terrorism, fanaticism and oppression. An old boyfriend used to call me Indian Princess. I liked that, it made me feel special. He never called me Pakistani Princess though, I guess it doesn't have the same ring.

Anyway, so when we were there, in Pakistan or India, I remember counting down the days from 92 to 0 until my family and I could return to New York City, home, where I could watch cable TV and understand what everyone said to me.

When you get back from India, you're going to have a lot of stories to tell. Like the time you bargained that merchant at the market down from 300 rupees to 50 rupees for that duputta you are now wearing, which has become your favorite clothing accessory. You really gained that guy's respect cause you bargained like a local.

I remember getting into fights with my mother because I wanted to wear jeans instead of a Shalwar Kameze when we were visiting Indian friends. In India you will feel completely welcome. Total strangers will invite you to stay in their home. They will share everything with you. Try not to compliment them on any item in the house, because they will surely offer it to you. And they won't accept no for an answer, they're like that.

I remember lying about my ethnic background. I would say I was mixed, Greek, Eastern European or even that I was adopted from some unknown origin. My blue eyes gave me that privilege.

You don't need a lot of money when you get to India, everything is so cheap there and the people are so generous.

I remember my sisters and I asking my mother to divorce my father after he had a particularly violent, drinking binge. She answered that she couldn't and that we didn't understand. Later I realized that we had no status in America without my father, and we had no money either.

While in India you might want to get your nose pierced, it's different, kind of mysterious, shows you've been somewhere.

I remember at my uncle's wedding in Toronto, I was wearing a Garara, a hand-me-down from my mother, and a man and a woman, they were white, they asked each other what it I was that I wearing and where it could possibly be from. They didn't ask me.

In India you will have much to fantasize about. Tantric sex goddesses, child brides, silent and obedient girls. Imagine taking off her sari, with its vibrant colours and its endless folds, her round hips slowly being revealed to you.

I used to wish my name was Debra, my friends would call me Debbie and my boyfriend would say, "com'ere, Deb."

A white traveller once called India her second home, she loved it so much. I'm not sure what home is.

When you come back from India, you can write about all you've seen, felt, heard, tasted: the guavas, the blazing sun, the Kuwali music, the poverty, the magic, the cockroaches as big as your white hand.

Well, I hope you have a good trip. Pick up some carpets while you're there, you could make a lot of money.

Sincerely,

Ummni Mohammed Khan

P.S. Some of my best friends are white people who want to visit India.

sea urchin

on the kitchen table
a poppy seed from a bagel
the last piece of katherine
i've seen for days
closer now
& tofino, long beach stretch
to the peripheral_

night here is a blue
like a hesitant flame
a billion pinpoints
of light tread water
cool whisper of a small stone
under a barefoot
while she watches the pacific
somewhere close
the stone inscribed
with strands of brine
sea alphabet

quiet & listen:
the in inside
the sound comes not from throat or
ribcage
but belly
space composed to hold
absence, food, motion
transient

now push

too quickly, prematurely
{like we/it did
faraway the pacific
where she can't
tear away
like breath cut
the oceanless
peripheral in montreal

stone in hand, mouth, belly
a leftover

GILBERT SALVADOR

Searing Critique

Semantic Anderson
Semiotext(e) CANADAs
Semiotext(e)/Marginal Editions 1995

One of the essays in Semiotext(e) CANADAs, Nancy Shaw's "Cultural Democracy and Institutionalized Difference," provides a concise history and critique of Canadian state-subsidized culture: "The government had continued to envision 'culture' as a means to mediate the effect of technical progress — employing it to integrate the country in the name of access and democracy, and to deflect any real analysis of competing social, political and economic interests... for Trudeau, culture served the dual purpose of presenting Canada internationally as an enlightened, socially advanced nation covering for the internal management of dissent..." (242) Semiotext(e) CANADAs, the book itself, is also partly the product of state-sponsored culture, having received assistance from the Canada Council Explorations Program; however, being Semiotext(e), far from participating in some of Canada's favourite self-aggrandizing myths, the many contributors provide wide-ranging and searing critiques of everything from multiculturalism, poverty, Canada Customs, and the space program to lobsters, clear-cutting, nationalism, and Hydro-Québec.

Probably the most successful aspect of the book is its engagement with Native issues. Most of these articles deal with land claims and rejection thereof in B.C., activism, the Oka crisis, the Hydro-Québec

James Bay/ Great Whale Project, (especially Marc Drouin: "Hydro-Québec: Power Politics or Bust," Milton Born with a Tooth: "Messenger of the River," Joe David: "How to Become an Activist in One Easy Lesson"). As well, Marie Ann-Hart Baker's "Gotta Be On Top: Why the Missionary Position Fails to Excite Me" is a wonderful, entertaining and intense discussion of cultural appropriation, and what she calls white feminists' "addiction" to First Nations' women. Scott Watson's "Race, Wilderness, Territory and the Origins of Modern Canadian Landscape Painting" deals with the myth that Canada was an empty wilderness before the arrival of the Europeans, and how that particular vision of Canadian nationalism was partly created in the popular consciousness by the Group of Seven, and sustained by their biographer and Northrop Frye.

Hardly any mention is made of other people of colour. There is one photo essay by Jin-me Yoon with text in Japanese, Chinese and Korean, and a fragment of an interview with Bharati Mukherjee titled "Mosaic? Why Not Fusion?", in which she states that encouraging immigrants to hold onto Old World (her term) culture resulted in non-Anglo immigrants being marginalized, and because she has not experienced racism in the United States, the melting pot approach to immigration must work better. Unfortunately she does not engage this interesting question in more depth. Jim Campbell's "Riot Rocks Toronto" deals with police violence against Toronto's black community and activists' responses. There is also a (perhaps not so) surprising concentration on central Canada, specifically Ontario and Québec. There is one mediocre contribution on the Maritimes (R.M. Vaughan: "Lobster is King: Infantilizing Maritime Culture") and a beautiful

piece by Herménégilde Chiasson: "Sentenced to Damnation," about the genocide of Acadian people and culture. B.C. and Alberta appear as contested land claim sites and places of environmental degradation. The Prairies do not exist. Relationship to language is somewhat odd as well. A number of articles have been translated, one may assume from French, although it doesn't actually say so anywhere. As well, one piece (La Société de Conservation du Présent: "de La Patate Globale") was left untranslated again without explanation.

Only two articles were so disappointing that I actually wondered why the editorial collective chose to include them: Anthony Wilden's "Imaginary Canada; Stereotypes and Scapegoating" in which Mr. Wilden, having read his ABC introduction to Freud and Althusser, expostulates on how WASP men project all their own bad characteristics onto women and non-whites which is why there is racism and sexism in this country (complete with diagrams of the white/non-white, man/woman variety just in case you didn't get it). As well, Joyce Nelson's "Speaking the Unspeakable: Understanding Ecofeminism" is a simplistic attempt to locate the originary moment of patriarchy (from which all the evils of the world have sprung) in "[a] three thousand year-old creation myth expressed in the first chapters of Genesis..." (131)

Space prevents me from detailing the many wonderful pieces in this book (there are over eighty contributors). Although I find some of Semiotext(e) CANADAs' exclusions troubling, it is a fascinating exploration of borders and boundaries, states and nations, snow and ice.

Outdone Again

Gavin McInnes
Mirrors
Mac Tin Tac
Montreal 1995

You can't deny it. Montreal has the strongest comic scene in the world and the rest are a bunch of bloody wankers. Everytime an anthology comes out of another city I'm embarrassed for them.

New York's Burger or WWII have good writing but the art looks like a bunch of rich art school kids did it. San Francisco's On Our Butts (women's comic anthology) is a tokenistic abomination (at least Twisted Sisters takes the time to find some talent). Even Boston's Don't Shoot it's Only Comics isn't that great despite having epic marvels like myself doing the cover

Montreal however, has outdone itself once again. Mirrors is this city's latest cream-of-the-crop comic anthology with 80 pages of beautifully printed comic art. It's actually the sixth issue of Mac Tin Tac which started eight years ago thanks to a rather healthy Quebecois grant (thank god frogs love their Bande Dessinée) and was put together by Marc Tessier and Alex Lafleur. The comic is all english and contains the same themes as earlier Mac Tin Tac issues. There's the glass factory, the banana drinks, the cakes....etc., all that and illustrators include Siris, Suicide, Jean-Pierre Chansigaud, Jeff Johnson,

and all the other Montreal anthology regulars (see Simon Bossé's Kekrapules).

The only problem is, all the stories are written by Marc Tessier and he reads way too much. If you take the art away you're left with a book that is, as Julie Doucet of Dirty Plotte called it, pretentious. Writing is for books and books are dull. Instead of some good 'ol Montreal sex and violence we have these lofty themes of poverty, love and self expression. Bo-o-o-oring.

Peter Bagge (Hate, fantagraphics) claims; "although Montreal has an abnormally high number of talented comic artists, they can't write." Mirrors is what happens when Montreal comics are forced to have content, but it's still the best comics anthology there is.

Tracing

Scott Duncan
Bodies in Motion
Kristina Drake
self-published 1995

"One of the great things about chap books," says Tina Drake, "is that they are short enough to work two levels at once - as a book of poems and as a story."

In its three "acts," "Bodies in Motion" explores these two levels. The poems trace the developments of a relationship through its oddly icy beginnings: "You want me now/to say I have never/want-

ed you," (Untitled) through a tumultuous physical upheaval, to a place that is safe enough to ask lots of questions: "I think/I must have been running" (Kinesiology).

At their best, the poems demand many interpretations from a single phrase. This is one of the book's strongest points. The second act, about an abortion, layers freedom to choose on the forfeiture of control to doctors. The poet's response is defiant yet uncomfortable: "Charles Jourdan/made a woman, hanging, as she is, hands joined/elbows raised/and bent above her head," ((de)pendants). At other points the response is ironic and direct: "They have the women in the stirrups/now," (Extractionists).

I feel that some of the pieces are encumbered by the poet's heavy-handedness. Defining "kinesiology" detracts from the fun of discovering for oneself its relation to the title of the book, for instance.

I am lucky to hold a copy printed on beautiful handmade paper, with flower petals in it and bound with cord. Copies for sale are a little less fancy, though they include a poem in an envelope (nice touch).

Shifting Gears

Dana Bath
Highways and Dancehalls
Diana Atkinson
Knopf Canada 1995

JULY 1, 1995. DEAR DIARY. started Highways and Dancehalls with a bad attitude. Atkinson on back cover: "the story of what happened when a stripper ... reached for a pen instead of a drink." second page of text: picara Sarah watches man because she is sure he is silently asking "What are you doing here" and she muses "My intelligence, so steadily mirrored back, makes me feel ridiculous." ridiculous and self-congratulatory, evidently.

JULY 2. Atkinson wants to be Evelyn Lau, and isn't. snippets of what may be faithfully reproduced dialogue: startling reality may become intensely cliché fiction. little self-examination. something here, though. can't define it yet. haven't thrown the book away.

JULY 3. Sarah taking pains to hide her scar, from us (ogling readers), from them (ogling patrons). incidental references, no evidence. this is why I'm still reading. body shame more than teenage Harlequin-esque pretty-girl-who-believes-she-is-ugly story. I want her to show it to me.

JULY 5. Highways and Dancehalls shifts gears. I forgive it everything, in retrospect.

JULY 6. "Everybody has to fall for something." fall for her despite myself. don't know if I'm anywhere new at the end. don't know if she earned this from me, but she's got it.

Gavin McInnes is the artist of Pervert comics. Scott Duncan is a Fluffy and an index staff writer. Dana Bath is going to Japan.

APPROPRIATION OF ALL AT THE SAME TIME



JULY & AUGUST

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31			3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Chris Ware
Signs comics
@ Nebula
7pm.
+
VOX HUNT
SLAM @ 8

Bistro 4
8pm
Ann Diamond
+ Michael
Andre

SEX FILES
STORNAWAY
@ 8pm
(multi-media
performance)

Shane Simmons
Signs LONG
SHOT COMICS
@ Nebula
5pm

Bistro 4
8pm
Mohamud S.
Togane

Ghosts of the
REVOLUTION
@ Café
Sarajevo
7pm

Bistro 4
8pm
Endre
Farkas

DEAD POETS
SLAM
FUNDRAISER
@ BAR MAITRE
RENAUD 8pm

W.A.R.M.
meeting
7pm

ALTA VOCE: A Québec
Without Borders - A
Canada Without
Borders. 8pm
@ LION D'OR

NB: V
Summer
Voices
Series

Bistro 4

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In July and August at **Bistro 4**: On Wednesdays in July the Summer Voices reading series: Ann Diamond and Michael Andre the **5th**, Mohamud S. Togane the **12th**, and Endre Farkas the **19th**. Samedi le **15** et le **29** juillet c'est Les Bruits du Silence — un événement multi-média aux poètes. Le **20** juillet c'est la conférence du Parti Humaniste. Et sur toutes les fins de semaines, la musique <<LIVE>> music every weekend.

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MIR
LEFT